SUGAR
NEEDLE
CANDY

It's a brand new year, 2006, and here's a brand new Sugar Needle, crammed full of sweet eating news, interviews and adventures. In 2005, Phloxie moved from Atlanta to Maryland, and Corina moved from Minneapolis to Portland OR. But we didn't forget about you, loyal readers...and we hope you enjoy this issue.

Our very cool cover is by Dave Kiersh, a cool and talented cartoonist. I contacted him when I saw his work in a zine that mentioned he, like Corina, was a library worker. Check out his work, you'll love it!
Dave has a website at www.davekcomics.com His new book published by www.bodegadistribution.com will be available April 2006. His favorite candy is Necco wafers.

Big thanks too, to Amy Sedaris, who's our centerfold interview this issue. She's an awesome actress, and a fantastic cook too. And she loves rabbits! Of course we had to interview her in the Needle.

And don't miss Phlox's review of Kit-Kats from Japan to tickle your tastebuds, in ways you won't believe.

Send your news, candy escapades and tastebud treats to:

Atlantic Sugar Needle
[redacted]

OR

Pacific Sugar Needle
Corina Fastwolf
[redacted]
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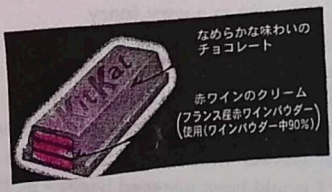
Japanese Candy Connection

While shopping in Atlanta this past autumn, I noticed Banana flavored Kit Kats at the local cool- kids store. Wondering what the heckers that was about, I researched Kit Kat some on the ever-reliable Internet. Now get this - Kit Kat is owned in the US by Hershey, but in Canada, Japan, etc. they are owned by Nestlé. Now putting politics away in the serious drawer, the imaginations of the Nestle people are far superior to those at Hershey when it comes to Kit Kats. Americans have Kit Kat White, Extra Creamy, Coffee, Mint and Orange. Canadians have Kit Kat Banana, Strawberry and Yogurt; while Japanese have Kit Kat with Canadian Maple Syrup and Kit Kat Red Wine! In fact in Japan, one of the Iron Chef guys has been recruited to come up with some pretty bizarre flavors - blueberry mango, etc. When I read about this, I knew that I just absolutely had to try Red Wine Kit Kat no matter who might try and stop me. I turned to ebay and easily located someone selling every Japanese flavor of Kit Kat imaginable and some other fun things too. About a week later, I was enjoying a tasty Maple flavored Kit Kat with REAL Canadian maple syrup - delicious!!! The Red Wine Kit Kat is fun too. Arriving in a very fancy presentation box - those Japanese love a nice package - the tiny individual candies are quite cute in their pink frosting. Although had no one told me what flavour these were supposed to be, I would have guessed berry - as the flavour is very, very subtle. Ah well, the best part of the experience was talking to the seller. I had imagined someone named Jason as having moved from the U.S. to support himself by buying and selling weird candies on ebay. Curiosity got the better of me and I managed the courage to send Mr. Jason a list of burning questions that every Sugar Needler needs to know.

Here are my questions and his kind answers: Enjoy!!!!!!!!

Phlox: "What is the weirdest candy you have ever seen and/or eaten?" Jason: "Genghis Kahn flavored caramel - Hokkaido is known for this delicious lamb dish but to blend the flavor with caramel??? I have yet to try it. A close second is Lavander flavored candies of all sorts. I have tired these. In Hokkaido where I live, there is a popular tourist destination, Furano, which is famous for its endless fields of lavendar. So the locals try to integrate the flower into any foodstuff. The perfume content of these Japanese candies is far beyond my threshold."

Phlox: "What is your favorite Japanese candy and why?" Jason: "American made candy is usually far sweeter than that of Japanese candy but the latter has deeper flavors. Since moving to Japan, my tongue has been transformed into a very sensitive tasting organ. Perhaps the low fat/sugar foods has had something to do with this. Candy bars are my first pick in the candy aisle I would say Melty Kiss original and Lotte Rum and Raisin are my top picks. But Nestle Kitkats always have a special place in my heart.



Phlox: "Do you have a website where we can buy your candy directly?" Jason: "No website at this time. Ebay is the place to contact me. Seller name: jappy 11. Most of my regulars find me on Ebay & then we do business from there."

Phlox: "Do you recommend any websites for fun Japanese candy news or other items of interest?" Jason: "I don't usually browse candy sites. Hokkaido is like a test market in Japan. Many flavors and varieties of candy come here first or exclusively. I usually do my research through flyers and in-store visits."

Phlox: "Why do you live in Sapporo? How long have you lived there? What is Sapporo known for other than beer?" Jason: "I have a family here. 2 children and a wife. My Japanese wife and I met in Vancouver 6 years ago and moved to Sapporo (her home town) 3 years back. We wanted a different lifestyle. Besides, taxes in Canada are brutal!!! If you are a skier, Sapporo and its limits have some of the best snow in the world. Always lots of powder and long skiing seasons. Many Australians make their summer home here. Everyone must also visit the Sapporo Snow Festival once in a lifetime. Amazing snow and ice sculptures adorn the central park and surrounding areas. And for beer drinkers, the Sapporo Beer Festival in summer is an outdoor beer garden that attracts 100,000s in Augusut. More brands than just Sapporo beer. What an atmosphere!"

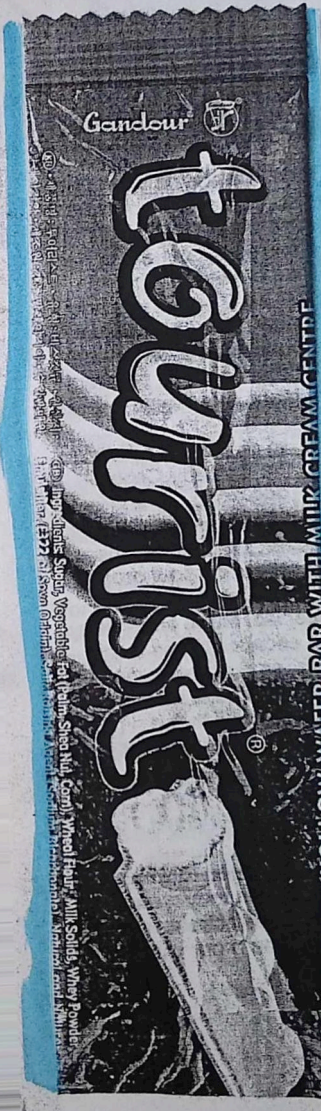
Phlox: "Is selling candy and toys on ebay enough to live on in Sapporo or do you have a day job or other cool side jobs?" Jason: "I think I could easily sell candy and make a living but this is just my side job. I get questions from ebay contacts daily about Japanese products that people crave. But teaching English is my 1st job. I work for myself so my days are very flexible. I spend a lot of time with my family and explore this fascinating country."

These herbal flavored cough drops which I think come from Serbia, also come in eucalyptus and some kind of mint or menthol flavor. They're called "Negro", and the logo of a chimney sweep seemed to refer to the black color of the candies...that is, until I read the list of ingredients: "Menthol-anise flavored filled hard candies of glucose syrup, sugar flavorings, and...active carbon." What's active carbon? Is it something left in chimneys that you scrape out after the fire?

I tried searching "active carbon" on the Internet. Along the way, I learned something interesting about carbonated beverages. In the old days, the carbon dioxide that made these drinks bubbly was made from sodium salts, and that's why carbonated drinks are called 'soda water' or 'sodas." It seems carbon is used mainly to filter dirt out of water, or color out of sugar. The main medicinal purpose listed for carbon was to soothe an upset stomach. So maybe it makes sense for a "cold candy" after all.

corina

Freyja is an Icelandic company that makes awesome chocolate covered licorice. But I think their Queen-of-the-Cats logo is pretty nice also.

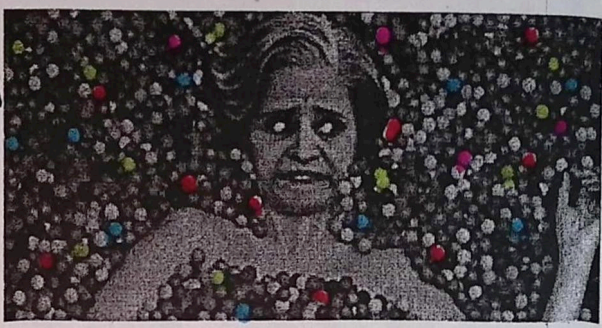


Tourist came from Keith in Taiwan, but I think it's made in Malaysia. It's self-described as "a hollow wafer bar with milk cream center." Actually, it was like these big wafer blisters filled with vanilla cream pvs! YECH! I had to rinse my mouth out it was NOT a good experience. If you think being a candy editor is all chocolates + bonbons... be forwarn

Blech!

♥ Corina

STRANGERS WITH CANDY - SUGAR NEEDLE INTERVIEWS AMY SEDARIS



I first saw Amy Sedaris in a play in New York called The Little Frieda Mysteries which was a Talent Family play she'd co-authored with her brother David. What impressed me about her was that she was willing to be silly, absurd, even ugly as part of her art. There's lots and lots of guys out there playing everyone from the goofy putz to the obnoxious asshole, but it's rare to find women that don't get typecast into the young, pretty bland stereotype ingenue role.

How refreshing then, to discover Sedaris' Strangers with Candy, the Comedy Central series which ran from 1999-2000, co-authored by Stephen Colbert and Paul Dinello. Sedaris plays Jeri Blank a "boozer, user and a looser," i.e. a 46-year old high school dropout drug addict, who's days at Flatpoint High School parody after school specials of the seventies.

Nothing and no one escapes barbs in this show; be it ethnic types, sexual preferences or bad education. What's perhaps most satisfying is the skewering of all those obnoxious sit-com platitudes that abound in dumb TV. When Jeri blathers, "It must be nice to hope for the thing you wish to want," and the violin music swells, well, how could TV be more quotable?

But while Amy as Jeri manages to wear pants so ugly you can't fathom they were ever invented, she's also an astute actress, with an array of facial expressions on a par with some

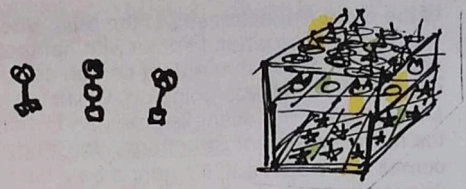
of the silent film actresses of the past. She mentioned once when I spoke with her that she tries to act so that a deaf person could understand what was going on. While the show's goofy, her acting is great, and when the movie version of Strangers with Candy comes out, watch out, it's gonna be a hit (though it was supposed to be out Oct. 2005, it got held up by legal crap- maybe next year?)

In the meantime, Amy recently starred as the voice of Foxy Loxy in Chicken Little, and will be publishing a book of etiquette and recipes next spring called I Like You. How could we NOT interview her for Sugar Needle?

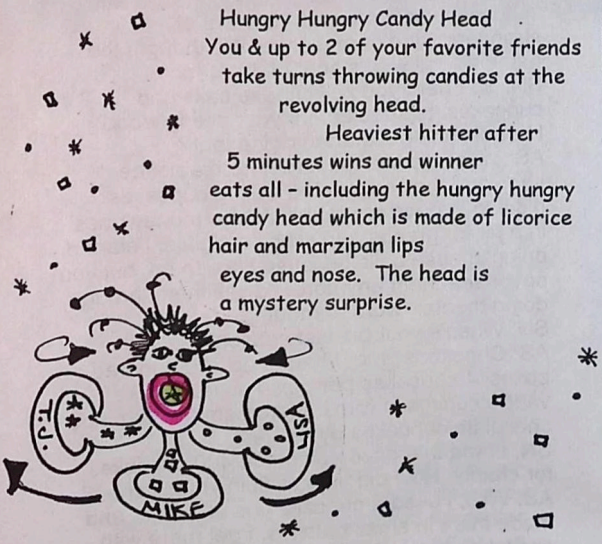
SN: So how did you come up with the name Strangers with Candy for your TV show?
AS: we had so many ideas.... We wanted something that went back to the idea of after school specials and that "beware of strangers" kind of message. We thought the name fit well with a shot of Jeri's face.
SN: So I hear you sell cheese balls and cupcakes, to supplement your acting work? How did you get started doing that?
AS: I lived across the street from a coffee shop and they suggested selling cupcakes. I did it to support my rabbit. All the money goes in a jar for greens and rabbit supplies. I started doing cheese balls because I like them, but you never see them anymore. I'd sell them through doing theater, word of mouth.
SN: When's your busiest season?
AS: Christmas time. I had to do 300 hundred boxes, 4 cupcakes per box. I usually make vanilla cupcakes with buttercream frosting. I do chocolate cupcakes by request.
SN: I read that once you made 400 cupcakes for charity. How did they all fit in your kitchen?
AS: Well, I used 2 cupcake tins at a time, and made them in small batches. I get more with chocolate batter.
SN: And, we have to ask, what's your favorite candy?
AS: It changes a lot, but I like peanut clusters, and Hershey's chocolate with almonds.
Check out Strangers with Candy on DVD and watch for Amy's book - it has the cupcake recipe, and they're GREAT!

♥ Corina

Imaginary Candy Games
phlox

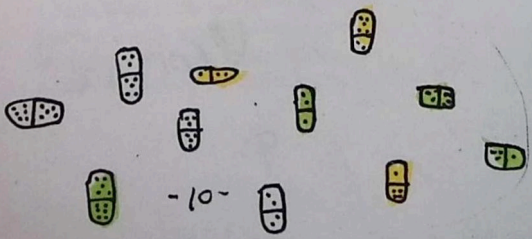


3 layer chess makes my brain hurt. 3 layer candy chess makes my teeth hurt! Level 1 = Caramel Pretzel Robots v. Marshmallow Fudge Androids; Level 2 = Raspberry Licorice Dogs v. Marzipan Crunchy Cats; Level 3 = Fantastic Planets of Chili Pepper Chocolate Truffles v. Exploding Asteroids of Freeze Dried 3 Berry Ice Cream.



Hungry Hungry Candy Head
You & up to 2 of your favorite friends take turns throwing candies at the revolving head.
Heaviest hitter after 5 minutes wins and winner eats all – including the hungry hungry candy head which is made of licorice hair and marzipan lips eyes and nose. The head is a mystery surprise.

Dominots – A yummy blend of dominoes and candy gummi dots! Each domino is a black forest chocolate cookie. Each domino dot is a candy dot affixed to the wafer cookie with candy paste. Cheaters trying to eat undesirable dominoes are easy to catch.



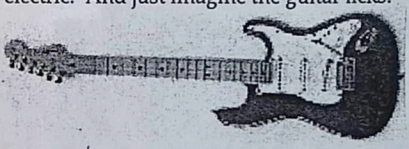
IMAGINARY CANDIES
by Corina

The Cand-a-Pault...hurls gobstoppers and jawbreakers into mouths of gabby cellphone users.

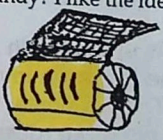
Candy eyelashes...paste them on and kiss or cry them away...in cherry, grape, lemon, lime, orange and licorice.

Marshmallow paste. Why? To glue together candy that breaks!

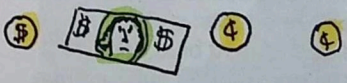
Candycoated Stratocaster - I'm imagining this guitar to be made of clear, hard candy, like a lollipop. Heck, you can make anything into a guitar, right? I don't know how candy resonates, but we're not talking hollow bodies here, we're going electric! And just imagine the guitar licks!



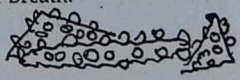
Gummy film on a roll...now that film is almost passe, why not make it a candy? I like the idea of technicolor gummi film.

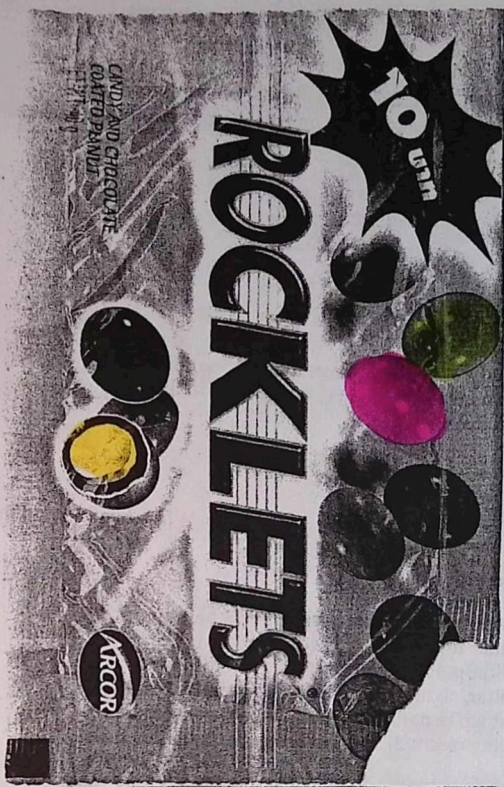


Candy counterfeit coins, and bills. It's a perfect replica, but if and when the cops bust down your door, all you do is eat the evidence.



Gross-out candies are everywhere. We've reviewed candy earwax, candy boogers, and candy smelly feet, to name a few. So how 'bout....Spittle Brittle? It'd be a candy boiled to the hard stage, then pumped full of air bubbles, so it dries like frozen spit! Like other hard candies, it'd probably cut up your tongue, but who cares? In 3 attractive flavors: Minty Mouthwash, Doubletrouble Bubblegum, and Morning After Breath.

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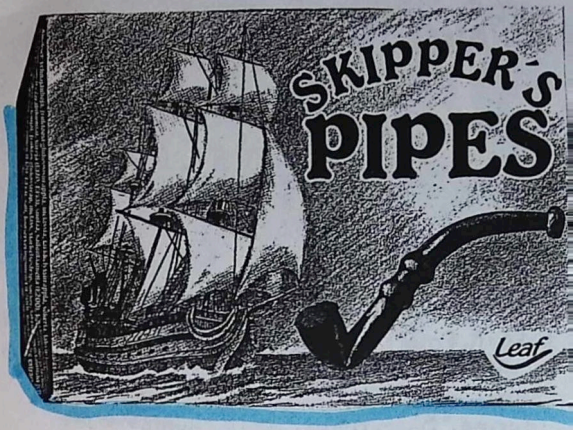
ROCKLETS
CANDY AND CHOCOLATE COATED PEANUT
ARCOR
CANDY AND CHOCOLATE COATED PEANUT. INGREDIENTS: SUGAR, ROASTED PEANUTS, COCOA BUTTER, COCOA MASS, WHOLE MILK POWDER, SKIMMED MILK POWDER, MALTODEXTRINE, EMULSIFIERS: LECITHIN, POLYGLICEROL POLYRICINOLEATE, STABILIZER: ARABIC GUM, GLAZING AGENT: SHELLAC GUM, COLOURS: TITANIUM DIOXIDE, TARTRAZINE, ALLURA RED, SUNSET YELLOW, BRILLANT BLUE, INDIGOTINE, FLAVOURING.

Rocklets are made in Argentina, but they came to me via my pal Keith in Taiwan. They're similar to peanut M & M's but taste more like rocks. The ingredients are to blame I suspect; shellac gum, glazing agent and polyglicerol blablahblah don't sound appetizing. But what nice color agents: sunset yellow, allura red and brilliant blue, and indigotine? I'm not sure I should have eaten these.

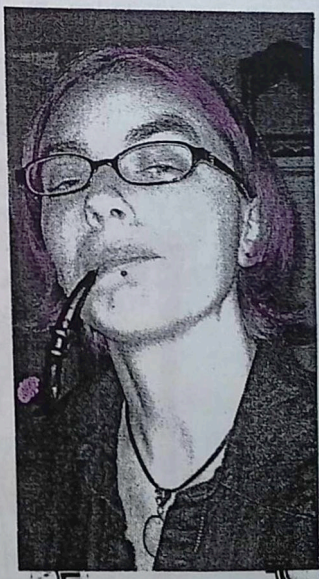
News Flash !!!

Sugar Needle is now distributed by Microcosm Publishing. Please check their website for more awesome stuff: www.microcosmpublishing.com

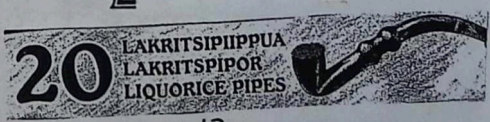


My friend Rennie sent me this whole box of licorice pipes with a note saying "You're the only person who would know what to do with these." They're very nice-looking black licorice pipes from Finland, with little red sprinkles atop the bowl, where the fire would be.

And I did know what to do with them. I served them at our potluck celebrating our move into our new apartment. ♡ Corina



Angela smokes a bowl

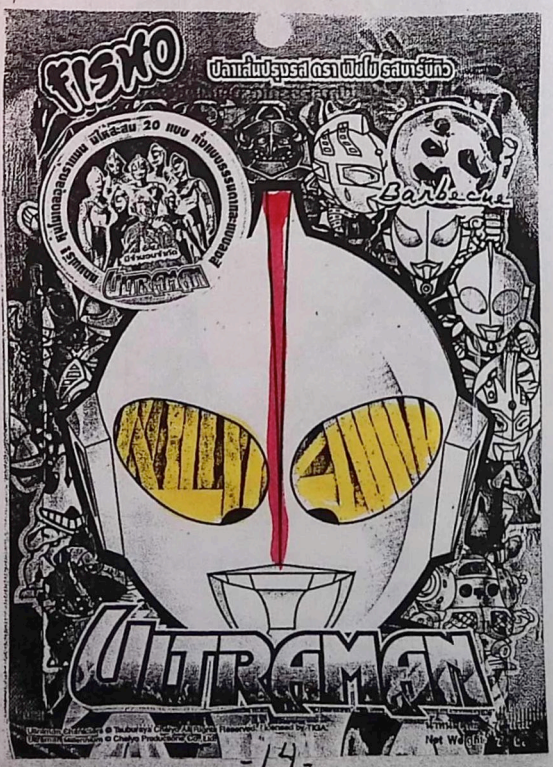


A penguin Bar is a milk chocolate covered biscuit, from England. This one came with the Funny fact: "No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver or purple." I dunno. "Door-hinge" sorta rhymes with "ORANge."

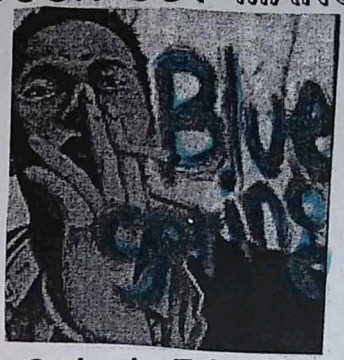
. . . - . . . . . - .

Dried fish and fish flavored chips are really popular Asian snacks. It seems odd to westerners to eat dried squid, but it goes with a beer as well as beef jerky, or fried pork rinds.

This packaging is especially nice, the yellow strips of dried barbecue fish show through Ultraman's eyes. Fisho lists other snacks on their website with flavors like "gangster chili" and "roller squid". Top that, Pringles and Frito-lay. ♡ Corina



TOUGH GUY MANGAS



Blue Spring by Taiyo Matsumoto
Viz Media LLC, ISBN: 1591166454

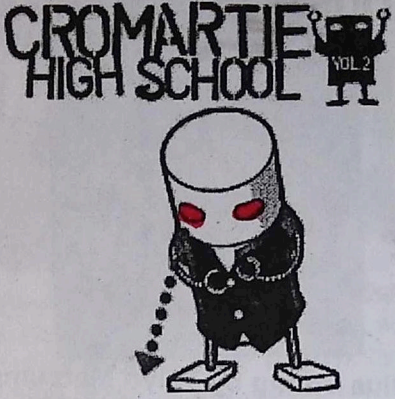
Matsumoto explains that this collection of comic book short stories is about a bunch of guys he remembers from school...the kind of guys who hung around, bored, listless, doing drugs or petty crime. The first story tells how they'd play this game, where they hang out on the roof of the school. They have to let go of the railing, and clap their hands. Whoever claps the most wins the game, if they don't fall to their death...a sort of high school Russian roulette. There's also a story about a kid who joins the Yakuza, and a great story about 3 kids who find a gun and 3 bullets- what a great premise! The stories are low-keyed, reflecting the feeling of kids going nowhere. But what makes this book superlative is Matsumoto's drawings. Like artbomb.net points out, his drawing style is in the same rank as guys like Paul Pope and Munoz, not so much big-eyed manga style, more international in scope. Skip the photoshop, his black and white ink drawings make you feel like you're looking over Matsumoto's shoulder watching him draw as he tells you the story. An added treat in this volume is that he's included all the Japanese graffiti that surrounds these kids on the streets and in the schools (and footnoted translations). Seeing stuff like "MASTURBATION CLUB" was inspirational. What high school wall would not be enhanced by graffiti like that? cont. on p.16 →

...& ONE SUPER ZINE

Secret Mystery Love Shoes
2000 NE 42 Ave.#303 Portland,OR 97213
1 dollar and a stamp

This zine is done my friends Andrew and Maria, and it's the best zine I've seen in months! It has awesome stories about their rat Larry, and a whole tour of his cool rat condo! It has a selection of "Laughs you can Choose From" - there's titters, chortles, snorts and gasps! There's tips for making a washtub bass, and about playing the ukelele. And lots more, including comics!

It's a steal for a buck and a stamp. Write and get your copy right away, and tell them Corina sent ya !



Cromartie High by Eiji Nonaka
ADV Manga, vol. 1 ISBN: 141390257

I can't recommend Cromartie High enough, but then, if you can't hack surrealism, this manga's not for you. You'll either get it or you won't. There's 5 volumes of this out, and the DVDs rock too. The art of both is unlike anything I've seen, sort of low-tech, paste it together, add whatever comes to mind.

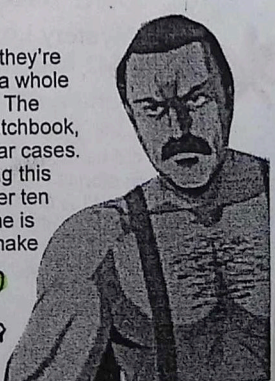
Cromartie High is known as a tough-guy high. No shit! All the students look like 28 year old men! New student Takashi Kamiyama is at first terrified, then gradually discovers, as do readers, these guys are really, really stupid. For example, everyone notices something odd about student Mechazawa, but only Takashi and his pal seem to realize - it's because tin-can shaped Mechazawa is a robot. There's another student that's a gorilla, and occasionally,Freddie Mercury appears, singing with his shirt off, or riding a giant horse through the high school grounds.

Although non-Japanese won't get a lot of the digs at Japanese culture (some are explained on the DVD), it's still goofy, funny and addictive. Again, this is not your stereotyped big-eyed manga; Nonaka's drawing style apparently apes Japanese about high school toughs that's similarly roughly drawn.

SMALLWALL CALENDARS!

Just $1 from Sugar Needle, PO Box 66835, Portland OR 97290.

Yes, get 'em now before they're gone, and while you have a whole fresh year to calendarize! The calendar's the size of a matchbook, perfect for wallets and guitar cases. Or walls. We've been doing this popular time keeper for over ten years, and this year's theme is mythical creatures. They make great mailable gifts too.



Corina